

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A method for facilitating participation in a slot game, comprising:
2 presenting a mechanical reel configuration comprising a plurality of active reel
3 segments;
4 presenting symbols in each of the active reel segments;
5 deactivating the active reel segments that are associated with a discontinue
6 symbol; and
7 repeatedly presenting symbols in each of the active reel segments, and
8 deactivating the active reel segments associated with the discontinue symbols, until a
9 predetermined number of the active reel segments have been deactivated.
- 1 2. The method as in Claim 1, wherein presenting a mechanical reel configuration
2 comprising a plurality of active reel segments comprises presenting the active reel segments
3 in a bonus mode of play in response to presentation of a symbol combination during a
4 standard mode of play that invokes the bonus mode of play.
- 1 3. The method as in Claim 2, wherein a bonus symbol set comprising the
2 symbols presented in each of the active reel segments during the bonus mode of play is
3 different than a standard symbol set comprising standard symbols presented in the
4 mechanical reel configuration during the standard mode of play.
- 1 4. The method as in Claim 1, further comprising at least partially randomly
2 selecting which symbol is to be presented in each of the active reel segments.
- 1 5. The method as in Claim 4, wherein at least partially randomly selecting which
2 symbol is to be presented comprises associating a reel strip having a predetermined symbol
3 set to each of the active reel segments.
- 1 6. The method as in Claim 5, wherein associating a reel strip having a
2 predetermined symbol set to each of the active reel segments comprises associating a
3 different reel strip to each of the active reel segments.

1 7. The method as in Claim 4, wherein at least partially randomly selecting which
2 symbol is to be presented comprises associating a predetermined symbol set to each of the
3 active reel segments.

1 8. The method as in Claim 4, wherein at least partially randomly selecting which
2 symbol is to be presented comprises associating a predetermined symbol set to a plurality of
3 the active reel segments.

1 9. The method as in Claim 1, wherein the active reel segments that are
2 deactivated by being associated with a discontinue symbol are de-emphasized to be
3 distinguished from the active reel segments.

1 10. The method as in Claim 9, further comprising retaining the discontinue
2 symbol in each of the active reel segments that are deactivated, thereby distinguishing the
3 deactivated reel segments from the active reel segments.

1 11. The method as in Claim 1, wherein presenting symbols in each of the active
2 reel segments comprises presenting continue symbols in one or more of the active reel
3 segments, wherein the continue symbols direct its respective one of the active reel segments
4 to remain active.

1 12. The method as in Claim 11, further comprising associating a credit award with
2 one or more of the continue symbols.

1 13. The method as in Claim 12, wherein associating a credit award comprises
2 associating a positive credit award having an additive effect on an accumulated credit total.

1 14. The method as in Claim 12, wherein associating a credit award comprises
2 associating a null credit award having no positive or negative effect on an accumulated credit
3 total.

1 15. The method as in Claim 12, wherein associating a credit award comprises
2 associating a negative credit award having a subtractive effect on an accumulated credit total.

1 16. The method as in Claim 1, further comprising associating a credit award with
2 one or more of the discontinue symbols.

1 17. The method as in Claim 17, wherein associating a credit award comprises
2 associating a positive credit award having an additive effect on an accumulated credit total.

1 18. The method as in Claim 16, wherein associating a credit award comprises
2 associating a null credit award having no positive or negative effect on an accumulated credit
3 total.

1 19. The method as in Claim 16, wherein associating a credit award comprises
2 associating a negative credit award having a subtractive effect on an accumulated credit total.

1 20. The method as in Claim 1, further comprising deactivating a predetermined
2 plurality of the active display segments in response to deactivation of one of the active reel
3 segments that is associated with a discontinue symbol.

1 21. The method as in Claim 1, wherein repeatedly presenting symbols comprises
2 automatically repeating presenting symbols and deactivating the active reel segments until all
3 of the active reel segments have been deactivated.

1 22. The method as in Claim 1, wherein repeatedly presenting symbols comprises
2 providing a user interface to allow a participant to initiate each repeated presentation of
3 symbols until all of the active reel segments have been deactivated.

1 23. The method as in Claim 1, wherein repeatedly presenting symbols and
2 deactivating the active reel segments until a predetermined number of the active reel
3 segments have been deactivated comprises deactivating the active reel segments until all of
4 the active reel segments have been deactivated.

1 24. A casino gaming apparatus hosting a gaming activity having at least a standard
2 mode of operation and a bonus mode of operation, the casino gaming apparatus comprising:
3 a video screen to present a display grid having a plurality of display cells;
4 a user interface to facilitate player participation in at least the standard mode
5 of operation; and
6 a processor configured to identify a predetermined symbol combination
7 occurring on the display grid during the standard mode of operation to activate the bonus
8 mode of operation, and during the bonus mode of operation to randomly present symbols via
9 a physical reel configuration which includes one or more reels having corresponding reel
10 strips, to deactivate the reels presenting a discontinue symbol, and to repeat the random
11 presentation of symbols and deactivation of the reels associated with the discontinue symbols
12 until a predetermined number of the reels have been deactivated.

1 25. The casino gaming apparatus as in Claim 24, wherein the processor comprises
2 a random number generator configured to randomly select the symbols for presentation via
3 the reels.

1 26. The casino gaming apparatus as in Claim 24, wherein the user interface
2 comprises a user interface mechanism to allow the player to initiate each repetition of the
3 random presentation of symbols.

1 27. The casino gaming apparatus as in Claim 24, further comprising a bonus
2 payout bar to present payout subtotals for each of the reels associated with the bonus mode of
3 operation.

1 28. The casino gaming apparatus as in Claim 24, wherein the processor is further
2 configured to automatically repeat the random presentation of symbols and deactivation of
3 the reels associated with the discontinue symbols until all of the active display cells have
4 been deactivated without player intervention.

1 29. The casino gaming apparatus as in Claim 24, wherein the casino gaming
2 apparatus comprises a slot machine, and the standard mode of operation of the slot machine
3 is a slot game.

1 30. The casino gaming apparatus as in Claim 24, wherein the casino gaming
2 apparatus comprises a video poker machine, and the standard mode of operation of the video
3 poker machine is a poker game.

1 31. The casino gaming apparatus as in Claim 24, wherein the casino gaming
2 apparatus comprises a video bingo machine, and the standard mode of operation of the video
3 bingo machine is a bingo game.

1 32. The casino gaming apparatus as in Claim 24, wherein the casino gaming
2 apparatus comprises a video keno machine, and the standard mode of operation of the video
3 keno machine is a keno game.

1 33. The casino gaming apparatus as in Claim 24, wherein the processor is
2 configured to repeat the random presentation of symbols and deactivation of the reels
3 associated with the discontinue symbols until all of the reels have been deactivated.

1 34. A casino gaming apparatus hosting a gaming activity having at least a standard
2 mode of operation and a bonus mode of operation, the casino gaming apparatus comprising:
3 a first reel configuration to display a plurality of display cells;
4 a user interface to facilitate player participation in at least the standard mode
5 of operation; and
6 a processor configured to identify a predetermined symbol combination
7 occurring on the first reel configuration during the standard mode of operation to activate the
8 bonus mode of operation, and during the bonus mode of operation to randomly present
9 symbols via a second reel configuration which includes one or more reels having
10 corresponding reel strips, to deactivate the reels presenting a discontinue symbol, and to

11 repeat the random presentation of symbols and deactivation of the reels associated with the
12 discontinue symbols until a predetermined number of the reels have been deactivated.

1 35. A method for facilitating participation in a slot game, comprising:
2 presenting a display grid comprising a plurality of active display segments;
3 presenting symbols in each of the active display segments;
4 deactivating the active display segments that are associated with a discontinue
5 symbol; and
6 repeatedly presenting symbols in each of the active display segments, and
7 deactivating the active display segments associated with the discontinue symbols, until a
8 predetermined number of the active display segments have been deactivated.